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Ophthalmic Literature

VOL. III. OCTOBER, 1913. NO. 10.

Published Monthly by EDWARD JACKSON, 318 Majestic Building, Denver, Colorado, U. S. A.

Price, Five Dollars per Year, in Advance.

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Entered as second-class matter November 6, 1912, at the Postoffice at Denver, Colorado, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Ophthalmic Literature

VOL. III. OCTOBER, 1913. NO. 10.

Edited by EDWARD JACKSON. Assisted by WILLIAM H. CRISP.

RECOGNIZING VALUES IN MEDICAL LITERATURE.

Because the values of certain writings are chiefly or wholly temporary, we would not exclude them from publication. A paper or even a book may be very useful this year, comparatively unimportant a year hence, and quite worthless a little later. But in general what is most valuable now will be of value always. The estimate which greatly alters with time was probably, from the first, a mistaken one.

It is difficult to judge the importance of an article at the first reading. Perhaps the best criterion is the strength of the impression that it makes on the reader. This at least indicates its probable value to that individual. Whether it has that value for the profession at large will depend on the breadth of that particular reader's acquaintance with what has previously been written on the same subject, and the depth of his thought regarding it.

In general the first clear statement of a truth has a peculiar permanent interest. Helmholtz's original account of the ophthalmoscope, or Oliver Wendell Holmes' essay on "Puerperal Fever" could be republished after a half century, and possess a fresh interest superior to almost anything that could have occupied the same pages; although the ophthalmoscope has since been as well described by twenty other writers, and important facts are now known with regard to puerperal fever of which Holmes had no inkling. The original presentation of an important matter generally places it in relation with the trains of thought that have gone before. These relations are permanent, although it would be out of place to dwell upon them in subsequent accounts of the same subject.

Often, however, the original statement is very imperfect; and only by discussion of different points of view carried on by a succession of writers is the thought of permanent value developed. Even when the original communication has contained it in germ, no reader, and perhaps not even the writer, perceives the importance of the point until others have handled the subject, and the less significant matters which conceal that importance have fallen away.

In the great mass of papers that make up current medical literature, the valuable parts form a very small proportion of the whole. It would seem as if an author having struck upon a valuable idea had so little confidence in its value, so little appreciation of its importance, that he felt it necessary to surround it and buoy it up with a great many standard ideas that have already achieved their position in literature, lest it should be overlooked and ignored. The result, of course, is exactly the opposite. The grain of new truth buried in a mountain of what has become commonplace is almost sure to be overlooked. Its original statement under the circum-

stances serves only as basis for a claim of priority, after the grain has been rediscovered by some one else. Prince called attention to the advancement forceps which bear his name in an article of a few pages. Had his idea been buried in an article of one hundred pages, such as one may find in any number of Graefe's Archiv für Ophthalmologie, the instrument would probably be known by the name of some one else who had suggested it later.

The ability to skim through a long paper and select the few sentences that are worthy of wide attention and a permanent place in the literature, is the chief qualification for writing abstracts of medical articles. Unfortunately there are writers of abstracts who do not possess it. The following may safely be laid down as a rule for the preparation of abstracts: Notice only those articles that contain what strikes you as important new points, and confine the abstract entirely to the briefest clear presentation of the new idea. The fitness of the abstractor for his work, the success with which he will perform it, will of course depend on his ability through previous reading to select the one important idea, and his willingness to confine himself to that, rather than fill his pages with what is "just as good" as a large proportion of medical literature.

The ability to do good work in abstracting literature need not be confined, and ought not to be confined, to those who are officially connected with medical publications. If the number capable of this kind of work were larger, the review departments of our journals would reach a better standard. And if one never sent his abstracts for publication, or even wrote them out, the method of reading which will give a good abstract, is the method which will yield the greatest profit to the reader.

One might say that in general all reading of current scientific publications should be done in this way. The student entering upon a knowledge of a subject through a good text-book needs to master every sentence and accept all that is set down for him. But just in proportion as his reading in the subject is extended, just in proportion to the breadth of view of it that he already has, should he pass swiftly over what is merely repetition, and with selective eye choose that upon which attention can be fixed with greatest profit. The best reading of a paper will often mean the spending of one-fourth the time skimming over it, and three-fourths in reading and thinking of a single paragraph.

THE CHATTANOOGA MEETING.

The meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Oto-Laryngology held October 27 to 29 was well attended, enjoyable and attained a good scientific standard in its program and discussions. The members and guests in attendance numbered 184, and 115 new members were elected. The oration by Lt.-Col. R. H. Elliot of Madras, India, dealt with the operation of trephining for glaucoma, and, with the symposium on glaucoma, constituted the leading ophthalmic feature of the meeting.

The following officers were chosen for the ensuing year: President, J. M. Ray, Louisville, Ky.; Vice Presidents, J. M. Ingersoll, Cleveland, Ohio; C. B. Wylie, Morgantown, West Virginia, and D. C. Louchery, Clarksburg, West Virginia; Secretary, L. M. Francis, Buffalo, N. Y.; Treasurer, S. H. Large, Cleveland, Ohio; Councillors, Allen Greenwood, Boston, Mass., and Samuel Iglauer, Cincinnati, Ohio. Boston was selected for the next place of meeting, at a date to be subsequently fixed by the Council.

Lt-Col. Elliot was made an Honorary Fellow of the Academy, and it was unanimously decided that all papers to be presented to the annual meeting should hereafter be published in a presessional volume and distributed to the Fellows. It was also decided to subscribe for copies of Ophthalmic Literature and the Index of Oto-Laryngology for all Fellows paying their dues before January 31 of the coming year.

BOOK NOTICES.

Transactions of the American Ophthalmological Society, Volume xiii, Part II, 8vo., 576 pages, 22 illustrations, 5 colored plates. Published by the Society. Wm. M. Sweet, Secretary. Philadelphia.

These Transactions are published in annual parts, three of the parts constituting a volume of 600 to 800 pages. This part contains the proceedings of the meeting held at Washington, May, 1913. The scientific work of this, the oldest of special societies among English-speaking peoples, increases in value from volume to volume.

This is the only strictly American publication that incurs much expense to include reproductions in colors of sketches prepared for and exhibited at its meetings. While it does not in this respect quite equal the Proceedings of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, its pages contain many such valuable records of interesting cases. Non-members do not generally realize the value of these transactions, which they can obtain at a moderate price from the Secretary.

Transactions of the Section on Ophthalmology of the American Medical Association, Meeting of 1913, at Minneapolis. Small 8vo., 552 pages, 51 illustrations. Published by the American Medical Association. Chicago. Price, $1.00.

For more than twenty years the American Medical Association has been publishing annually the transactions of its Section on Ophthalmology, and these annual volumes have grown with the development of the Section, both in size and intrinsic scientific worth. They are in the main reprinted from the Journal of the A. M. A., except that in the volume some papers are published in full that are only published in abstract in the journal. The extremely low price at which these volumes are issued leaves no excuse for their absence from the shelves of every working ophthalmologist in America.

They have a peculiar value for the library of the man who does not take many current publications, because the discussions that accompany nearly every paper reflect the present views of a large number of the most wide-awake and thoughtful of contemporary workers in this branch of medicine.

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Abstracts From Foreign Journals

Roelofs, C. O., Relation Between Accommodation and Convergence. (Graefe's Archiv für Ophthalmologie, LXXXV, page 66.)

A series of experiments was made to determine the maximal divergence in different states of accommodation; the relative position of rest while fixing an object at considerable distance, and during stimulation of accommodation by negative lenses; and finally the relative position of rest during fixation of an object at various distances. The technique of the various experiments is described. It was found that with practice and patience the experimenter reached the same maximum of divergence, whatever the amount of accommodation exerted, and vice versa that with any degree of divergence any amount of accommodation within the normal range could be used. During monocular vision the exophoria became gradually greater in the course of half an hour, and during monocular vision with accommodation the association between accommodation and convergence became gradually less pronounced.

The position of rest was determined in 93 persons with emmetropia, 80 with myopia and 69 with hyperopia. (As emmetropes were reckoned, those persons who had not more than 0.5 D. myopia or hyperopia in either meridian.) The influence of the refractive condition on the position of rest is shown graphically and in a series of tables.

The author arrives at the following conclusions:

(1) The anatomical position of rest of the eyes of almost all human beings is exophoria.

(2) Orthophoria is the result of convergence innervation.

(3) The strong inclination to orthophoria in emmetropes and ametropes with good binocular vision is the result of well-developed associations, in the first place between innervation for accommodation and for convergence, and secondly, between the idea of distance and innervation for convergence.

(4) These two associations, acquired through experience, can only be developed in the presence of good binocular vision.

(5) In the presence of binocular vision, hyperopia often causes marked esophoria. Myopia more frequently produces exophoria, although at times it results in esophoria.

(6) While the esophoria of hyperopes depends upon the assistance afforded by convergence to the stronger accommodation needed for sharp vision, the exophoria of myopes results from the absence of association between accommodation and convergence. If binocular vision is abolished, the sense of distance can cause convergence innervation, but convergence is not necessary for accommodation.

(8) The esophoria of myopes may be explained on the basis of a giving up of binocular vision for distance on account of the poor visual acuity, whereas at close range, binocular vision is retained, these conditions resulting in the development of an association between the perception of retinal stimuli and a certain degree of convergence.

Larsen, H. Cranial Deformity with Eye Symptoms. (Klinische Monatsbl. für Augenheilkunde, 1913, Aug., p. 145.)

Nineteen cases are described, 16 male and 3 female. The statistical material collected by Patry in 1905 included 58 men and 10 women. Thirteen of Larsen's patients showed a typical boss on the top of the head. Fourteen had more or less exophthalmus. There was divergent strabismus in 17, convergent in 2 and nystagmus in 15. With the exception of one eye of one patient, which had 6/6 vision, all the patients had very low visual acuity, the best vision being fingers

at two to three meters. But most of them were inmates of an institution for the blind. In three of six cases which came to autopsy, there were defects in the cranial wall. The view that optic atrophy in these cases is a direct consequence of increased intracranial pressure, is supported by the fact that in two cases which came to section there was blindness without any narrowing of the foramen opticum. As regards the prognosis of cases of tower skull, it is noted that two cases had died of purulent meningitis and were found to have hernia of the brain into the nasal cavity. Only one of the nineteen patients was mentally defective.

Cramer, E. The Question of the Anaphylactic Origin of Sympathetic Ophthalmia. (Klinische Monatsbl. für Augenheilkunde, 1913, Aug., p. 205).

In a woman of 38 years, a dislocated lens was removed from an amaurotic eye through a linear incision. Apart from the formation of some adhesions, healing was smooth and the eye became perfectly quiet. Four months later the patient came with severe sympathetic inflammation of the other eye, the pupil being secluded and occluded. The aphakic eye was removed. A previously slight deafness became almost absolute, in spite of the absence of signs of middle-ear disease. After some time this deafness entirely disappeared, and the sympathising eye became quiet. The patient returned three months later. The eye was moderately inflamed, the lens quite opaque, projection good. The scalp hair, formerly abundant, had become very thin, and after a further two months the patient was almost completely bald. The scanty remaining scalp hair, as well as the greatly thinned eyebrows, lashes and axillary and pubic hair, were snow white. The whole clinical picture is attributed to anaphylaxis.

Kuhnt, H. Late Infection After Elliot's Trephine Operation. (Zeitschrift für Augenheilkunde, XXX, p. 137.)

The case was one of slowly developing glaucoma, without inflammatory attacks, in a man of 44 years. The right eye was 2 D. myopic, had a visual acuity of 5/5, and showed deep glaucomatous excavation, and a tension of 55-60 mm. The left eye was myopic 7.5 D., had vision of 5/36 (?), and showed deeper excavation than the right eye, and tension of 60-65 mm. The left eye was trephined on February 10, with peripheral iridectomy and suture of the conjunctival flap. Healing was normal, and there were marked enlargement of the visual field, improvement of vision to 5/18, and a good filtration scar. On February 25 the right eye was trephined with the same technique. On the 26th repeated sneezing was followed by sharp bleeding into the anterior chamber and under the conjunctival flap, resorption occurring slowly. The filtration scar in the right eye smoothed down, and by May 2 the tension of this eye was up to 35 mm. At the same time the tension of the left eye was 17 mm. On June 2 the man returned with the statement that on the previous evening the left eye had become suddenly blind and very painful. There was very marked ciliary injection. The conjunctiva over the trephine opening was thickened, eroded and showed a greyish-yellow infiltration. The cornea was dull, the aqueous cloudy, and there was iritis with hypopyon. The conjunctival secretion contained pneumococci. The treatment included irrigation of the conjunctival sac with oxycyanide solution, instillation of scopolamin, warm compresses, mercurial inunctions, and sweating. The condition gradually improved until, on July 20, the vision was 5/24. But the filtration pad gradually disappeared, and on July 20 the tension had risen to 30-32 mm.

The filtration scar probably furnished a place of entry for bacterial invasion of the anterior uvea.

Verderame, F. Effect of Subconjunctival Injections of Chloride of Sodium on Ocular Tension in Man. (Annali di Ottalmologia, XLII, p. 73.)

The tests were made on three series of eyes, with normal, increased and lowered tension, respectively. Two, three and four per cent solutions of sodium chloride were used, in quantities of 0.5 and 1 ccm. The injections were made under holocaine, and after preliminary measurement of the tension. The tension was again measured at once, or after from 30 to 60 minutes, and further measurements were made on the same and successive days. The first series of experiments included 24 eyes with normal tension. Almost without exception the injection produced a rise of tension, which varied from 2 to 7 millimeters of mercury. The increase of tension was greater with the more concentrated solutions, and also with the injection of larger doses. Immediately after the injection there was no appreciable change in the tension. A distinct rise was noticed after one hour, and the increase steadily continued for a further period of from two to four hours. After this there was a gradual fall, the original tension being reached at the end of eight or ten hours. In one or two instances the tension twenty-four hours after the injection was very slightly lower than in the first place.

The increase of tension cannot very well be explained by the mechanical effect of the introduction of the salt solution under the conjunctiva; since in such case the rise should be found immediately after injection. The gradual increase seems to confirm Wessely's theory, that subconjunctival injections exert a powerful stimulus on the ciliary body, thus tending to increase the ciliary secretion, and in this way the intraocular tension.

The greatest increase of tension, tested in the same individual, was obtained when the injection was made close to the limbus, and the least when the injection was made posteriorly in Tenon's space. In some cases repeated injections caused a marked weakening of the effect as regards increase of ocular tension.

The next series of tests included two hydrophthalmic eyes, six eyes affected with inflammatory glaucoma, and four with glaucoma simplex. In these the results were generally similar to those obtained in normal eyes. The rise of tension produced varied from 4 to 15 mm. of mercury. In two cases of inflammatory glaucoma the increase of tension was followed by a respective lowering of 2.5 and 3 mm. below the primary reading. But in these and the other glaucomatous cases, the use of miotics produced a much more decided drop than that secondarily resulting from the subconjunctival injections. In one instance a typical glaucomatous attack followed the injection of 0.5 ccm. of a 3 per cent solution of sodium chloride, the tension rising from 48 to 62.5 mm. of Hg. In glaucoma simplex there was a notable fall of tension, which was preceded, however, by a rise, and lasted only forty-eight hours. In these cases also the action of miotics was more marked than that of the injections.

The effect of the injections was also studied on seventeen eyes with retinal detachment and subnormal tension. In nearly every case there was a rise of tension, which reached its maximum four to six hours after the injection, and fell again to the original level some hours later. Here again greater concentration or larger dosage produced a more marked effect. In some instances, after repeated injections, there was a slight persistent rise of tension which lasted for several days.

Subconjunctival injections of salt solution, therefore, seem to be indicated in those cases of retinal detachment in which it is important to promote the absorption of exudate lying behind the retina. For this purpose the treatment should be repeated at relatively short intervals.

Guglianetti, L. Action of Pilocarpin and Atropin on the Pars Ciliaris and Pars Iridica Retinae. (Archivio di Ottalmologia, XX, p. 614).

At short intervals after instillation of either of the two drugs in the conjunctival sac, or injection beneath the skin, of albino rabbits, the eyes were enucleated and prepared for microscopic study. The only change produced by either drug was a slight swelling of the cells of the pars ciliaris and pars iridica, without appreciable modification in the mitochondrial apparatus (finer structure of the cells).

Motolese, F. Cusylol in Ophthalmology. (Annali di Ottalmologia, XLII, p. 176).

Recalling that cusylol, introduced by Arlt in 1909, is a combination of citrate of copper with borocitrate of soda, freely soluble in water, the author describes at considerable length his physical, bacteriological and clinical experiments and observations with regard to the drug, as the result of which he states the following conclusions: (1) In contrast with sulphate of copper, which is powerfully astringent, cusylol is completely lacking in such action, and is therefore in this respect unquestionably superior to the older copper salt; (2) Cusylol cannot be numbered among the bactericides of the first order, although this fact is offset by the ability to employ strong solutions and several doses daily; (3) In ophthalmia neonatorum the drug is useless; (4) In trachoma it offers great advantages at all times, except in the acute stage.

Tristaino, B. Influence of Chloride of Calcium on Ocular Tension and Glaucoma. (Archivio di Ottalmologia, XX, p. 588.)

The writer reports tonometric measurements on rabbits and on clinical cases of glaucoma. In the rabbit subconjunctival injections of a 10 per cent solution of chloride of calcium were made. In the human subjects, four in number, two or three teaspoonfuls of a 6 per cent solution in water and syrup were given three times daily. In the animals experimented upon the subconjunctival injections lowered the ocular tension from 4 to 8 mm. of Hg., according to the frequency and strength of the dose. In the four glaucoma cases a marked lowering of tension was obtained, the total reduction varying from 20 to 45 mm. of Hg. Marked relief from pain also resulted, together with rapid absorption of hyphema in a case of hemorrhage.

Ophthalmic Journals

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Printed by Western Newspaper Union